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ABSTRACT

This literature review focuses on research concerning the effect of peer tutoring on student achievement and self-concept in the modern classroom. Studies of peer tutoring and student achievement deal with the effects of tutoring on the instructional process, student attitudes and interests, student motivation, and pupils' self-direction. More recent studies have been concerned with improvements in achievement for both the tutor and the tutee. Studies reported on the effects of tutoring on self-concept examine effects on attitudes toward school and self; self-esteem, basic reading skills, and vocabulary; and motivation to learn. Effects of tutoring on behavior and interest in the school process are also reported. Although most programs have been designed to help the tutee, studies suggest that, in some cases, the tutor may have received the greater benefits. (AS)

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PEER TUTORING: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SELF-CONCEPT AS REVIEWED IN SELECTED LITERATURE

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Introduction

Making adequate provisions for the individual educational needs and interests of students in the typical classroom has long been a concern of educators. This concern led to the use of various procedures and methods. While improvements have been made in the educational process, much remains to be done especially in terms of satisfying the specific and varied individual student needs. When the educational needs of students are not met, they do not perform at a level consistent with their academic potential. Peer tutoring was suggested as a method to be used to more adequately meet the student needs and interests.

Peer tutoring has been used for years as a teaching/learning strategy. The ancient Greeks and the Romans used student tutors. Comenius (1592-1670) supported tutoring and felt that it was of definite benefit to both the tutor and the tutee. The Montessori system, the one-room schoolhouse, and the Lancastrian approach all used students to help teach other students.

This study was developed primarily to determine the benefits of peer tutoring in the modern classroom. Is motivation and enthusiasm for learning increased for the tutor and tutee who are involved in the peer tutoring process? Do students involved in tutoring develop more positive self-concepts and attitudes toward school? How do the achievement

levels compare for the students involved in tutoring with those who were not involved?

Statement of the Problem

This study was designed to determine the effect of peer tutoring on student achievement and self-concept in the modern classroom as reviewed in selected literature.

Review of Selected Literature

Since this study was directed toward determining the effects of tutorial programs on achievement and self-concept, the recent literature related to these two factors was examined.

The Effects of Tutoring on Achievement

Young school age children teach each other to do any number of things such as to play ball, build models, and sing songs. As children learn to play together, they are also learning other important lessons such as sharing, communication, and interaction skills.

Children remain willing and motivated to learn from each other. Recent evidence points in the direction of the beneficial effects on student motivation as they assumed the job of the teacher. Blaney, Stphan, Rosenfield, Aronson, and Sikes (1977) described an experiment in an elementary classroom in which each child performed the role of the teacher and successfully taught a brief unit of information to a

small group of students. In a review of studies related to peer tutoring, Devin-Sheerhan, Feldman, and Allen (1976) supported the position that tutoring enhances the instructional process.

Bloom (1984) reported the advantages associated with tutoring. He and his associates found, after a series of studies, that the average tutored student outperformed 98 percent of the students in the control group. In addition, student attitudes and interests were positively influenced by the tutoring process.

Other studies suggested that instructional time may not be fully utilized because students found it necessary to wait in order to have a question answered or receive clarification of instructions. Hiebert (1980) reported that peer tutoring, which enabled students to draw upon one another's expertise, may be a solution to this kind of problem. Increased time on task through the use of this technique improved grades. Many instructional tasks could be carried out as peer-directed activities. Opportunities to assume increased responsibility for their own learning and that of others served as motivational factors for students. Thus, peer-tutoring helped students to become more self-directed. Berhman (1973) suggested that tutoring programs increased student motivation and improved his self-concept.

Hill and Tanveer (1981) conducted a study in which 38 tutors and 38 tutees were involved in sessions related to mathe-

matics. The tutors were in the sixth grade, and they were helping second and third graders. While the results were mixed regarding the effectiveness of peer tutoring, this study indicated that tutoring may increase motivation, achievement, and self-direction of pupils.

Cohen and Kulik (1981) reviewed and summarized 65 studies related to tutoring. Eight of the studies dealt with the attitude of tutees toward subject matter they had been taught. In all eight of the studies, student attitudes toward the subject matter were more positive in classrooms with a tutorial program. Five of the studies investigated the effects of tutor attitudes toward the subject matter they were teaching. In four of these studies, attitudes were more positive for the tutors.

Walberg (1984) indicated that personalized and adaptive instruction, such as tutoring, increased learning. Burke (1983) also supported the use of tutoring.

Gains in achievement by the tutees have been the focal point of many studies related to tutorial programs. More recent studies have been concerned with improvements in achievement for both the tutor and the tutee.

Reed (1976) reported that, as a result of being involved, tutors reinforced their own knowledge when they prepared the materials to teach, which, in turn, enhances their self-confidence and self-esteem. The tutees received individualized instruction, had opportunities to interact with students

who may have overcome similar problems, and therefore, discover and reinforce their own unique strengths. Thus, the tutees received a boost in self-confidence in addition to association with a role model.

Some studies supported positive gains in achievement while others found no specific increase in achievement as a result of tutoring. Bierman and Furman (1981) supported these findings and also indicated that the reasons for success or failure of any one program are unclear.

Collins and Caleuro (1974) found that after three months of tutoring, the tutees' achievement level in mathematice increased with each month of tutoring. Klann (1975) supported tutoring as a way to increase the reading achievement levels of students who were eligible for special education services.

Pierce (1982) reported increased competence in academic areas as a benefit of tutoring. In addition, other positive advantages were suggested. Tutees received increased individualized attention, influence of a role model, and gains in self-esteem. The tutor improved his knowledge of the subject and his social skills. Benefits for the teacher included increased opportunity to individualize instruction, increased comparing and consulting with other teachers, and the development of more positive attitudes among students and between students and teachers.

Cohen and Kulik (1981) reported studies in which the tutors out performed the control groups. They also supported the positive effect of tutoring programs on the tutee achievement.

The Effects of Tutoring on Self-Concept

In addition to other benefits associated with a tutorial program, both the tutors and the tutees seem to have developed more positive attitudes toward school and toward themselves. Although most programs were designed to help the tutee, the tutor may have received greater benefits than the tutee in some programs.

Price and Dequine (1982) studied a program in which low-achieving students served as tutors in a reading class for non-English speaking students. As a result of this experience, the tutors experienced significant gains in self-esteem, basic reading skill, and vacabulary.

Kaven (1981) pointed out the significance of a positive self-concept. This is seldom measured in a system where grades and standardized achievement are the only measures of a successful educational program.

Tyler (1984) suggested that the purpose of schooling was much more than learning things used only in the classroom. If this is to be done, more effective ways to individualize instruction must be found and used.

Steinberg and Cazden (1979) reported a study in which they pointed to the unusual ability of the tutor to deal with problems associated with the instructional task. The tutoring role may cause inreased effort and concentration as the teaching job is assumed. The "troublemaker" may exhibit more acceptable behavior. The quiet and passive student may become more positive and outgoing.

Gartner, Kohler, and Riessman (1971) reported that tutoring may produce academic gains and positive attitude changes in the tutor. Other benefits included heightened self-esteem and increased motivation to learn.

Bierman and Furman (1981) reported a study which involved 112 fourth grade students in a foreign language program. The results of the study indicated that children enacting tutor roles tended to form more positive attitudes than children in tutee roles and that role had a major impact on attitudes. It was felt that children associated the role of the tutor with characteristics such as competence and prestige. In the course of enacting those roles, they applied these characteristics to themselves; and thus, positively influenced their self-perceptions. While the actual ability of the tutee was better on achievement tests, they did not feel as smart, quick, or skillful as the tutors did.

Lazerson (1980) conducted a study which examined gains in self-concept and improvement in behavior for sixty students. Both aggressive and withdrawn children were selected for the study and paired with other students with similar problems. At the end of the five week experiment, almost all active participants showed higher gains than the control group in the self-concepts and made greater behavioral improvements. In addition, there was an increased interest in school and in the learning process. A study by Baldwin (1975) agreed that peer-tutoring increased interest in the school process.

Cohen and Kulik (1981) summarized nine studies which dealt with the effects of tutoring programs on tutee self-concept. In seven of the studies, self-concepts were more positive for students in classrooms with tutoring programs.

Sixteen studies summarized by Cohen and Kulik related to the self-concept of the tutors. In 12 of the studies, the self-concept was higher for tutors. In four of them, the self-concept was higher for the control group.

Hailey (1981) conducted a study which involved 104 students. His study dealt with the effects of cross-age tutoring on self-concept and mathematics achievement. Fifty-two high achieving eighth grade mathematics students and 52 low achieving fourth grade students were randomly selected as subjects. The eighth grade and fourth grade students were then randomly divided and assigned to the experimental and control groups. The experimental group was involved in tutorial sessions for 30 minutes each day, three days each week for a six week period.

No significant difference was reported for achievement or self-concept for the tutors as compared to those eighth grade students who did not tutor. A significant difference was found for achievement and self-concept for the tutees as compared with students who were not tutored at the .05 level.

Summary

Peer tutoring is a worthwhile and valuable technique for use in the classroom. Evidence has been collected which in-

dicates that this flexible instructional tool can add measurably to motivation, self-concept, and achievement of students. It can also be used as a means of helping students to accept responsibility and to gain an increased sense of self-worth and social understanding. The tutorial program clearly provides benefits for both the tutor and the tutee.

Tutorial programs have strong and positive effects on the achievement and motivation of the tutee. Tutored students have more positive self-concepts and attitudes toward school than their peers.

Tutoring programs also have positive effects on the tutors. Higher achievement and motivation gains were reported for tutors than for those students in the control groups.

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